

Message Text

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R 221334Z OCT 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELTN, OCON, OAS, US, XM

SUBJECT: FOURTH INTERAMERICAN TRANSPORT CONFERENCE,
SEPTEMBER 1978

1. DURING THIRD INTERAMERICAN CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORTATION
SEPTEMBER 6-9 IN QUITO, THE US (DOT) DELEGATION WAS NOMI-
NATED AND ELECTED, WITHOUT HAVING VOLUNTEERED, TO SERVE AS
HOST FOR THE FOURTH SESSION, SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER OF 1978.
EL SALVADOR VOLUNTEERED TO SERVE AS ALTERNATE. ON OCT. 15,
DOT SECRETARY COLEMAN SENT THE FOLLOWING LETTERS VIA REGIS-
TERED AIR MAIL TO MINISTER VEGA MORA OF ECUADOR AND MINISTER
SEAMAN OF EL SALVADOR INFORMING THEM OF THE SECRETARY'S
DECISION NOT TO HOST THE SUBJECT CONFERENCE:
TO ECUADOREAN MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS VEGA MORA QUOTE
DEAR MR. MINISTER: MR. JOSEPH R. COUPAL, DEPUTY ADMINISTRATO
OF THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, WHO LED OUR DELEGATION
TO THE THIRD INTERAMERICAN CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORTATION INFRA
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STRUCTURE IN QUITO, HAS REPORTED TO ME ON THE RESULTS OF THAT
CONFERENCE. I WISH TO CONGRATULATE YOU ON THE SUCCESS OF THE

MEETING, AND TO THANK YOU FOR THE WARM RECEPTION AFFORDED OUR DELEGATION.

IN CONNECTION WITH HIS REPORT, MR. COUPAL HAS INFORMED ME THAT DURING THE COURSE OF THE MEETING, THE UNITED STATES

WAS NOMINATED TO SERVE AS HOST FOR THE 1978 CONFERENCE. I REGRET TO SAY THAT WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO ACCEPT THIS NOMINATION. IN PREPARING FOR THE QUITO MEETING, WE GAVE CAREFUL THOUGHT TO THE POSSIBILITY OF VOLUNTEERING TO HOST THE CONFERENCE IN 1978. FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS WE DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR US TO DO SO AT THIS STAGE. WE HAVE REVIEWED THE MATTER IN THE LIGHT OF THE QUITO NOMINATION AND WE FIND OUR VIEWS UNCHANGED. WE LOOK FORWARD TO FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE AND TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT, AT SOME FUTURE TIME, A WASHINGTON MEETING WOULD BE APPROPRIATE. BECAUSE EL SALVADOR VOLUNTEERED TO SERVE AS ALTERNATE HOST FOR THE 1978 CONFERENCE, I HAVE WRITTEN SEPARATELY TO MINISTER SEAMAN TO ADVISE HIM OF THIS DECISION. SINCERELY, WILLIAM T. COLEMAN, JR.

TO EL SALVADOR'S MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS SEAMAN QUOTE DEAR MR. MINISTER: AT THE RECENT THIRD INTERAMERICAN CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN QUITO, THE UNITED STATES WAS NOMINATED TO SERVE AS HOST FOR THE 1978 MEETING. YOUR DELEGATION VOLUNTEERED TO SERVE AS ALTERNATE IN THIS CAPACITY.

REGRETTABLY, WE FIND THAT WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO ACCEPT THE NOMINATION. I ENCLOSE A COPY OF MY LETTER TO MINISTER VEGA IN QUITO, INFORMING HIM OF THIS DECISION. I FELT THAT YOU SHOULD BE ADVISED PROMPTLY IN VIEW OF YOUR POSITION IN THIS MATTER.

I WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS WITH THE MEETING, AND WOULD BE PLEASED TO PROVIDE SUCH ASSISTANCE AS MAY BE FEASIBLE. SINCERELY, WILLIAM T. COLEMAN, JR.

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2. EMBASSIES ARE NOT EXPECTED TO TAKE ANY ACTION ON THIS MATTER. SHOULD THE SUBJECT BE BROACHED BY THE AFFECTED GOVERNMENTS, DRAW UPON THE FOLLOWING AS NECESSARY:

THE FIRST THREE SESSIONS OF THIS MINISTERIAL LEVEL CONFERENCE FOCUSSED PRIMARILY ON TRANSPORTATION AS A PUBLIC WORKS TOOL IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS, FOR EXAMPLE, RURAL FEEDER ROADS CONSTRUCTED BY LABOR INTENSIVE TECHNIQUES, AND THE COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS APPROPRIATE FOR SUCH PROJECTS. AT QUITO, THE CONFERENCE EXPANDED ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE

TO ENCOMPASS ALL MODES AND PHASES OF TRANSPORTATION.
DOT WISHES TO CONTINUE TO ASSIST LATIN AMERICAN MINISTRIES
WITH EXCHANGES OF VIEWS AND INFORMATION WHEREVER FEASIBLE.

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HOWEVER, THE NEW FORMAT IMPLIES ESTABLISHMENT OF A BROAD
NEW INTERNATIONAL FORUM, IN EFFECT AN INTERAMERICAN
CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF TRANSPORTATION, WHOSE RELATION-
SHIP TO EXISTING FORUMS IN ECLA AND OAS (HIGHWAY, RAIL,
AND PORTS CONFERENCES) DOT FINDS MOST UNCLEAR. DOT IS
RELUCTANT TO TAKE THE LEAD ROLE IN ESTABLISHING A NEW
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION ON THIS BROAD BASIS WITHOUT
CAREFUL STUDY TO ASSURE NEED AND DEFINE AN AREA OF INTEREST
NOT COMPETITIVE WITH EXISTING INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES. THUS,
DOT STRONGLY PREFERS THAT A LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRY HOST
THE 1978 MEETING.

3. FYI ADDITIONAL ASPECTS OF THE DECISION SHOULD BE KNOWN
TO POSTS. A. THE ELECTION OF US (DOT) AS HOST WAS CON-
TRARY TO A CONFERENCE RULE TO SELECT FROM AMONG VOLUNTEERS.
B. CONFRONTED BY THIS UNUSUAL SITUATION, THE US (DOT)
REPRESENTATIVE ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION CONTRARY TO INSTRUC-
TIONS PROVIDED THE DELEGATION. C. THE ROLE OF HOST
INCLUDES THE PROVISION OF A SECRETARIAT FOR TWO PRECEDING
YEARS. D. RESOURCE LIMITATIONS REQUIRE DOT TO TAILOR
INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY AS PRUDENTLY AS POSSIBLE TO AREAS OF
PROSPECTIVE MUTUAL BENEFIT. BILATERAL COOPERATION OPPOR-
TUNITIES IN LATIN AMERICA ARE OF INTEREST. HOWEVER, MAJOR
INVOLVEMENT IN A MULTILATERAL INTERAMERICAN FORUM WOULD
DRAIN FINANCIAL AND STAFF RESOURCES FROM AREAS OF CURRENT
INTEREST (EUROPE, CANADA, JAPAN) WHERE TRANSPORTATION

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PROBLEMS ARE SIMILAR AND EXTENSIVE RESEARCH PROGRAMS PRO-
VIDE RETURNS RELEVANT TO DOT'S DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES.
END FYI.

4. POSTS ARE REQUESTED TO REPORT ANY REACTION EXPRESSED TO
SECRETARY COLEMAN'S LETTERS. KISSINGER

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